

My Testimony  
By  
Charles Hanson

I was eleven years old when God placed His “call” upon my life. I came from a large family of four boys and four girls. At that time, my father pastored a small church in Piedmont, Alabama. As children, we made up part of my dad’s congregation.

Being kids, we would often “play” church. One morning my younger brother and I were playing church and he was the song leader. That morning when he finished singing, he turned the service over to the preacher; the preacher being me! My brother took a seat on top of a milk can. When I started preaching, my brother started shouting. The milk can over turned, and tossed him about six feet off the back porch. Obviously, he was a little bummed up!

My life changed in May of 1964. This was the end of my fifth grade year. During this time, our church was in revival with Rev. Archie Gardner. The very first night of revival, I went to the altar and gave my heart to Jesus Christ. I remember how the Lord’s conviction tugged at my heart. It was not because of what Brother Gardner was preaching, but because I was afraid that I would die and go to hell. The following night, I was back in the altar seeking God’s face. It was then that I received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. That night I began a journey that would consume the rest of my life; one that would include Jesus as my “tour guide.”

In June of that same year, I went with a friend of mine to youth camp at Piedmont Springs. My friend was a little older than I was. I was in a different class and didn’t know anyone. By Thursday, I was homesick. I saw Brother Archie Gardner at the campground. Brother Archie lived down the road from us, so I asked him for a ride home. After I got home, I began to read and study the Bible. That is when the Lord placed the call to preach on my life. Up until this time, I had told no one about this.

Our house was the place for the neighborhood boys to meet and play ball. There was an old log cabin that sat by the lake near our house. That old log cabin became my first church. We would go up to the log cabin and have prayer meeting services. We would sing and then I would preach. One day, I heard Mama tell Daddy, “The boys are playing church up there in that old building and Charles is preaching.” I could not resist telling her that we were not playing church; it was real! The Spirit of the Lord was meeting with us. That is when my parents found out that God had placed His call upon my life.

A few weeks later, my daddy asked me to preach for him. Just like any new preacher, I was inexperienced, but I knew the Lord’s anointing was on my life for His glory. Several pastors in the area heard I was preaching. Since Daddy was pastoring himself, he could not take me to preach. I asked my two older brothers to drive me. When and if I got a love offering, we always had to go by the Dairy Queen and I had to feed my brothers. I guess that was paying them for being my chauffeurs!

Through the years, I have witnessed the move of God. I stand amazed at how God is able to use someone like me. He has carried me down paths I could never image. My heart's desire was to pastor full time, and God allowed me to do that for 30 years. God allowed me to be a pastor to pastors, by serving as District Superintendent for the Central Georgia District for fourteen years. I served our church as Home Mission Director for two years.

God led me to start a mission called "Community Unity," which is a kid's club in the Macon, Georgia, area. A group would go in and feed the children, then minister through a devotion. The area that we ministered in was drug-infested. Many have said that after ministering there the crime rate went down. The ministry continues today through others carrying on the work. My passion has always been to win the lost. I believe "missions" is across the street as well as across the sea.

I am indebted to my wife Susan, and our two daughters, Dawn and Julia. They have helped and greatly enhanced my ministry. Our sons-in-law, David and Tony have stood by me, also. Our five grandchildren, Jared, Colton, Maggie, Katelyn and Madison have been wonderful blessings to me.

Through this amazing journey, I know most of all that my God has never left or forsaken me. He will go with me to the end of the world. Ecclesiastes 9:10 says, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." This is exactly what I have tried to do by the Lord's help. As I look back on my life, I give God all the praise, honor and glory!